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## BAY AREA & CALIFORNIA NEWS STORY

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Oct. 18 - Oct. 24, 2002

# Honda Opposes Bush Administration's Force in Iraq

**San Jose Democrat leads discussion about war's consequences**

By May Chow  
AsianWeek Staff Writer



Honda (above) and others spoke on the devastating effects war with Iraq will have on civilians in the Middle East and civilians here in the United States. Photo by May Chow.

Urging President Bush to exhaust all diplomatic efforts before imposing military force on Iraq, Rep. Mike Honda, D-San Jose, led a panel of local experts who discussed political, humanitarian and ethical consequences of a potential U.S. attack, in Santa Clara on Saturday afternoon.

"Iraq does not exist by itself," Honda said. "The decisions our government makes relative to Iraq will have consequences that will extend all over the world. How many thousands of American lives is the administration willing to imperil?"

Of the Bay Area's 13 House members, 10 voted against the president's resolution authorizing force in Iraq, including Honda and Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-San Jose. Local representatives who voted in favor of the measure included Ellen Tauscher, D-Walnut Creek, Tom Lantos, D-San Mateo and Richard Pombo, R-Stockton.

A no vote also came from Rep. Nancy Pelosi, D-San Francisco, who said war with Iraq could destabilize the nation's war on terrorism and hurt the already weak economy.

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A full house packed into Santa Clara University's Mayer Theatre to hear Honda and others speak on the devastating effects war with Iraq will have on civilians in the Middle East and civilians here in the United States. Attendees also had a chance to ask questions.

Although many on the panel discussed which political and strategic steps to maneuver through this matter, the humanitarian issue garnered the most response from audience members.

"We have all this talk about weapons and policies measures and resolution numbers, but what about the lives?" said Jim Deharpporte, of the Catholic Relief Services. "The current living standards in Iraq are extremely poor: think what war could do to exacerbate the current situations."

Deharpporte added that while it is impossible to determine the exact effects war with Iraq could have on its civilians, there will certainly be dramatic impacts on the current living situations. These include an increase of casualties, a depletion of medicine and proper hospital facilities, and hordes of refugees looking for places to go because of internal displacement.

Honda said he called for the discussion not to only discuss the civilian side of war, but to also inform the public about the different effects that Bush's resolutions would have on the world.

"My effort here today is to continue to educate ourselves," Honda said. "The issues are very complicated and extend all around the world."

After 20 hours of debate on the floor, the U.S. House of Representatives voted last Thursday 296-133 to authorize President Bush to "use the armed forces of the United States as he determines to be necessary and appropriate in order to defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq."

White House press secretary Ari Fleischer noted after the vote that the president would continue to collaborate with the United Nations and had not settled on going into war with Iraq.

Bush has asked the U.N. Security Council to work on a resolution that would give the go-ahead for military force if Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein refuses to eliminate his supply of weapons as promised after the Persian Gulf War.

Members from both sides of the House cautioned Bush to form alliances with the U.N. Security Council. Many agreed that war should be the last resort.

"I believe that the U.S. can ensure that Saddam Hussein is not developing weapons of mass destruction by working with the U.N.

Security Council to gain consensus on a tough and effective plan to gain the necessary, unfettered access to inspect Iraqi facilities," Honda said.

Honda added that the U.N. has the power to form a multinational force that would carry more legitimacy and garner stronger support from the U.S. and other nations.

In move that surprised many, California Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein voted to back Bush's resolution. But California Democratic Sen. Barbara Boxer voted against it. Like Honda, Boxer wants the United States to work through the United Nations. She stated that America could be left alone in this situation if its allies sense that the president is threatening war with Iraq for domestic and personal reasons.

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